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Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 62/58, commended the Mediterranean countries for their efforts in meeting common challenges through coordinated overall responses, based on a spirit of multilateral partnership, towards the general objective of turning the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchanges and cooperation, guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity, encouraged them to strengthen such efforts through, inter alia, a lasting multilateral and action-oriented cooperative dialogue among States of the region, and recognized the role of the United Nations in promoting regional and international peace and security.

2. The Assembly also recognized that the elimination of the economic and social disparities in levels of development and other obstacles, as well as respect and greater understanding among cultures in the Mediterranean area, will contribute to enhancing peace, security and cooperation among Mediterranean countries through the existing forums.

3. The Assembly called upon all States of the Mediterranean region that have not yet done so to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, thus creating the necessary conditions for strengthening peace and cooperation in the region.

4. It also encouraged all States of the region to favour the necessary conditions for strengthening the confidence-building measures among them by promoting genuine openness and transparency on all military matters, by participating, inter alia, in the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures and by providing accurate data and information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

5. The Assembly encouraged the Mediterranean countries to strengthen further their cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the possible resort by terrorists to weapons of mass destruction, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and in combating international crime and illicit arms transfers and illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking, which pose a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the region, and therefore to the improvement of the current political, economic and social situation, and which jeopardize friendly relations among States, hinder the development of international cooperation and result in the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the democratic basis of pluralistic society.

6. Furthermore, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on means to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. The present report is submitted in compliance with that request and on the basis of information received from Member States.

7. In this connection, a note verbale dated 19 February 2008 was sent to all Member States requesting their views on the subject. To date, the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Netherlands, Poland, Qatar and Ukraine have replied, and their responses are contained in section II below. Any replies received subsequently will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Governments

Bosnia and Herzegovina

[Original: English]
[12 May 2008]

In the western Balkan region, significant progress has been made in fighting organized crime, especially in the detection and processing of criminal offences relating to illegal migrations and the smuggling of persons through the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That level of efficiency in the area could not be reached without unselfish international cooperation between police agencies and authorities of the countries in the region, based on mutual confidence, professionalism and determination to suppress this form of crime. The measures taken and the results achieved in this field become more important, bearing in mind that organized smuggling of persons in EU countries represents, in fact, a base for development of other forms of organized crime, first of all illicit production of and trafficking in narcotic drugs.

Successful police measures have prevented the activities of criminal groups at the international level. Also, the proceedings for confiscation of profit gained through criminal activities have been initiated, which, in addition to affirming international police cooperation, represents a key step in fighting international organized crime and its consequences.

Netherlands

[Original: English]
[11 June 2008]

The Netherlands, like other European Union member States, believes that European security is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean region. The Netherlands is pleased with Libya's decision to eliminate all material, equipment and programmes connected to the production of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Another important issue for the Mediterranean region is the trafficking in and smuggling of human beings. This issue needs to be combated through political dialogue and cooperation between criminal justice authorities.

Together with the EU, the Netherlands calls on all States of the Mediterranean region that have not yet done so to accede to all multilaterally negotiated, legally binding instruments related to disarmament and non-proliferation, in order to strengthen peace and cooperation in the region.

Poland

[Original: English]
[27 May 2008]

1. Poland is strongly committed to peace, security and stability in the Mediterranean region. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership remains a guiding framework for dialogue and cooperation in this field.

2. Participating in the Barcelona Process, Poland has been involved in the implementation of the five-year work programme adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Summit in 2005. In the Lisbon conclusions of November 2007 the EuroMed Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their determination to eradicate all forms of terrorism and agreed that the EuroMed ad hoc meetings on terrorism should be oriented more towards the practical implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism.

3. In spite of the continuing conflict in the Middle East, the EuroMed partners have succeeded in maintaining a political dialogue aimed at creating a peaceful, stable and secure Euro-Mediterranean region. Poland acknowledges the political involvement of the EU in the settlement of the Middle East conflict within the Quartet, as well as its wide support to the Palestinian Authority.

4. Poland recognizes the importance of promoting dialogue between cultures. We support the activities of the Anna Lindh Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures aimed at shaping the Euro-Mediterranean region as an area of cooperation, exchange, mobility, mutual understanding and peace.

5. Poland welcomes the progress in the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) with regard to the Mediterranean countries, which contributes to reinforcing the Barcelona Process.

6. Polish representatives have been actively involved in the parliamentary dimension of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership; the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly held its most recent plenary session in March 2008, covering the major issues of importance for the region, such as political dialogue and countering terrorism.

Qatar

[Original: English]
[13 May 2008]

The Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar has the honour to provide below, as per the request of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the views of the Government of the State of Qatar on the issues outlined in General Assembly resolution 62/58:

- The State of Qatar supports the transformation of the Mediterranean region into a region for dialogue and exchange and cooperation processes. It maintains excellent relations with the countries of the region, while the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean region share with the State of Qatar membership in the League of Arab States.

- The State of Qatar respects all cultures in the Mediterranean region, believes in promoting mutual understanding among those cultures and hopes to strengthen the existing relevant forums.

- The State of Qatar calls upon all States of the Mediterranean region that have not yet done so to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The State of Qatar will not hesitate to contribute to the creation of the necessary conditions for strengthening peace and cooperation in the region.

- The State of Qatar, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolutions, provides information on the measures it has taken on the national level concerning specific matters in the field of disarmament and confidence-building, including:

  - Illegal trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects,

  - The implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction,

  - Other related matters.

- The State of Qatar cooperates with all States in the field of counter-terrorism and drug control.

- The State of Qatar believes that a comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian question would contribute to improving the circumstances in the Mediterranean region, and generally in the Middle East, in all aspects.

Ukraine

[Original: Russian]
[8 May 2008]

Information on the implementation by Ukraine of resolution 62/58 on strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Ukraine joined Operation Active Endeavour, the NATO anti-terrorist operation in the Mediterranean Sea, having signed the corresponding Agreement (through an exchange of letters) on 21 April 2005 at a meeting of the Ukraine-NATO Commission at the level of Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Vilnius, the Republic of Lithuania. The Agreement was put into effect by Decree No. 71/2006 of the President of Ukraine of 26 January 2006.

The operation's objective is to combat terrorism by preventing illicit shipments of weapons and ammunition by sea and to counter the illegal movement of persons and other illegal activities with the use of civilian vessels.